United Nations CEDAW/C/VEN/Q/7-8

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

List of issues and questions in relation to the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*

Legislative and institutional framework

1. Please provide information on the status of the bill on the rights of women to gender equality and equity (CEDAW/C/VEN/7-8, para. 15)[1] and indicate whether it contains a definition of discrimination against women in line with article 1 of the Convention. Please provide updated and detailed information with regard to the comprehensive review of the Criminal Code, in particular amendments to provisions that are relevant to guarantee equality between women and men (para. 17).

2. It is stated in the report that the State party has launched an equality plan for women covering the period 2009-2013 to guarantee and strengthen women's rights (para. 26). Please indicate whether the plan has been monitored and evaluated and, if it has, please provide information on the results achieved. Please indicate whether the State party is envisaging the development of a new equality plan for women and, if it is, provide information about its key elements. Please provide updated information on the work of the Subcommittee on Gender Statistics, in particular on the implementation of the gender indicators developed by it and presented in 2011 (paras. 31-32).

Access to justice

3. In the report, mention is made of the establishment by the Supreme Court of Justice, in 2010, of the National Gender Justice Commission, which develops policies to guarantee women's right to gain access to justice and enhance the "gender justice system" (para. 73). Please provide information on specific measures taken by the Commission to formulate strategies and policies to eliminate institutional, social, economic and other barriers faced by women in gaining access to justice. Please also provide information on results achieved. Please clarify the

* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group for the fifty-ninth session, meeting from 3 to 7 March 2014.

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, paragraph numbers refer to the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of the State party.

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role of the Commission with regard to the various components of the gender justice system (para. 72).

4. Please provide further details on the complaints of violations of women's rights received by the Public Prosecution Service, such as the number of complaints received, the type of rights violated, the relationship of the victim with the perpetrator, the age of the victims and the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions (para. 83). Please also update the data provided for the period 2011-2013.

National machinery for the advancement of women

5. It is indicated in the report that the Ministry of People's Power for Women and Gender Equality was established in 2009 as the national machinery for the advancement of women (para. 20). An office of the Ministry has been established in each of the 23 states of the country (para. 21). Please provide detailed information on the mandate and human and financial resources of the Ministry.

6. In the report, mention is made of the establishment of the National Office for Women's Rights within the Ministry of People's Power for Women and Gender Equality; the Office's mandate is to guarantee effective and transparent access to justice for women (para. 78). Please provide further information on the mandate of the Office, including on whether it deals with complaints of discrimination against women in all areas covered by the Convention.

Stereotypes

7. Please provide information on measures directed at the public in general and at professionals providing services to women aimed at eliminating patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes with regard to the roles of women and men in society. Please provide information on measures taken to eliminate practices that promote stereotypical images of women, in particular in the media, such as the portrayal of women and girls as sex objects and the promotion of images of women's bodies that conform with societal expectations. Please provide information on challenges faced in implementing the Act on Social Responsibility in Radio and Television (2011), which is aimed at eliminating stereotypical images of women (paras. 62-64).

Violence against women

8. Please provide information on the challenges faced in ensuring the effective implementation of the Act on Women's Right to a Life Free from Violence (2007) and on measures taken to overcome such challenges. Please provide information on the proposed amendment to the Act to incorporate provisions criminalizing femicide and applying penalties.

9. In the report, it is mentioned that 25,215 protection measures and 13,315 precautionary measures relating to violence against women were enacted between 2011 and June 2012 (paras. 85-86). Please provide information on the root causes and prevalence of violence against women in the State party. Please provide data disaggregated by relationship between victims and their perpetrators, number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions in cases of violence against women and number and type of reparation provided to the victims.

10. Please provide further information on shelters for women victims of violence, in particular on how many such shelters have been established and their location, the regulations in place for their functioning, which institution is in charge of their operation and whether an oversight body supervises the services offered to women victims of violence on a regular basis (para. 78).

Trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution

11. Please provide information on the prevalence of the phenomenon of trafficking in women and girls in the State party, in particular in border areas. Please provide updated information on the time frame for the adoption of the bill on trafficking in persons (para. 92). Please provide further information on the implementation of the National Plan of Action to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons and on progress achieved (para. 98), in particular with regard to trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Please provide information on the legal framework on prostitution in force, the extent of prostitution in the country and assistance available for women who wish to leave prostitution. Please also provide information on measures taken to discourage the demand for prostitution, as previously recommended by the Committee (CEDAW/C/VEN/CO/6, para. 28).

Participation in political and public life

12. It is indicated in the report that Decision No. 080721-658/2008 of the National Electoral Council established the principles of parity and rotation of power in the composition of lists of candidates (para. 102). Please provide further information with regard to the effective and full implementation of that decision and its impact on the representation of women in the National Assembly and in other elected positions. Please also provide information on any temporary special measures taken in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 to ensure women's equal representation with men in the executive and judicial branches of government.

Education

13. Please provide information on measures taken to improve the quality of education, in particular at the primary and secondary levels, such as revisions to the school curricula and capacity-building of teachers. Please also provide information on measures taken to include comprehensive, effective and age-appropriate programmes on sexual and reproductive health and rights as a regular part of the school curriculum for adolescent girls and boys, as well as on programmes aiming at the elimination of negative stereotypes on the roles of women and men in society.

14. Please provide data disaggregated by sex on the dropout rates at the secondary and tertiary levels of education, in particular in rural areas, and information on specific measures taken to reduce the rate at which girls drop out of school, especially as a result of pregnancy. Please provide further information about the technical vocational education opportunities for girls, including the fields offered and the number of girls enrolled in such education.

Employment

15. Please provide information on specific measures taken to close the gender pay gap, ensure the implementation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value

and eliminate the segregation of women in low-skill jobs, in particular in the private sector (para. 147). Please provide information about the implementation of Presidential Decree No. 8921, adopted in April 2012, by which women working in the informal sector and housewives are enrolled in the social security system. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure the implementation of the legal framework for the protection of maternity (para. 151), including sanctions against employers. Please provide information on measures to combat sexual harassment and clarify whether provisions prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace are included in labour and other relevant legislation.

Health

16. Please provide information on whether an assessment of the measures taken to date to decrease the maternal mortality rate has been conducted so as to identify why the rate has stagnated (para. 179) and, if such an assessment has been conducted, please indicate whether new measures to reduce the maternal mortality rate are envisaged. Please provide further information about the implementation of the Official Regulation for Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health Care, in particular on its measures to decrease the number of teenage pregnancies and on results achieved (para. 199). Please provide information about the prevalence of unsafe abortions and on measures taken to ensure access to post-abortion services to women. Please also provide information on the status of the discussions on the decriminalization of abortion, at least under certain circumstances, and on steps taken not to penalize women who undergo abortions. Please provide information about the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among women, in particular pregnant women, and on measures taken to eliminate discrimination against women living with HIV/AIDS.

Rural women

17. In the report, it is indicated that the State party has conducted assessments on gender relations in rural areas (para. 229). Please provide information on the findings of the assessments. Please provide further information on measures taken to develop specific strategies aimed at promoting access by rural women to economic and social benefits. Please provide information on access by such women to basic services.

Indigenous women and women of African descent

18. Please provide information on the measures and policies, including temporary special measures in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, adopted or envisaged to improve access by indigenous women and women of African descent to justice, education, employment, health-care services, land and natural resources, credit facilities, community services and decision-making and their participation in political and public life.

Women in detention

19. Please provide detailed information on the situation of women in detention (paras. 46 and 60). Please provide data, disaggregated by age, geographical location and ethnicity, on women in detention.

Marriage and family relations

20. Please provide information on measures taken or envisaged to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for both women and men, in line with article 16 (2) of the Convention and the definition of the child contained in article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Please provide updated information on the status of petitions lodged by the Ombudsman's Office with the Supreme Court of Justice challenging discriminatory provisions in the Civil Code relating to the minimum age of marriage, set at 14 years for girls and 16 years for boys (art. 46), and restrictions on the remarriage of divorced women (art. 57) (paras. 17 and 234-236).